

DOZUKI

Setting Up Professional Lights

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SUMMARY

Proper lighting is the most important element of photography—after all, the word "photography" means "light picture." No professional photo studio is complete without a clean background and proper lighting. Use this guide to select the right lighting equipment and set it up to create outstanding guide images.

Step 1 — Selecting Light Fixtures



- Proper lighting is key in creating high-quality guide photos. The better your lighting is, the less work you have to do in post-processing later on.
- A standard household lamp on a table provides light, but it is weak and you can't adjust which way it points. You need something a little more heavy duty.

Step 2



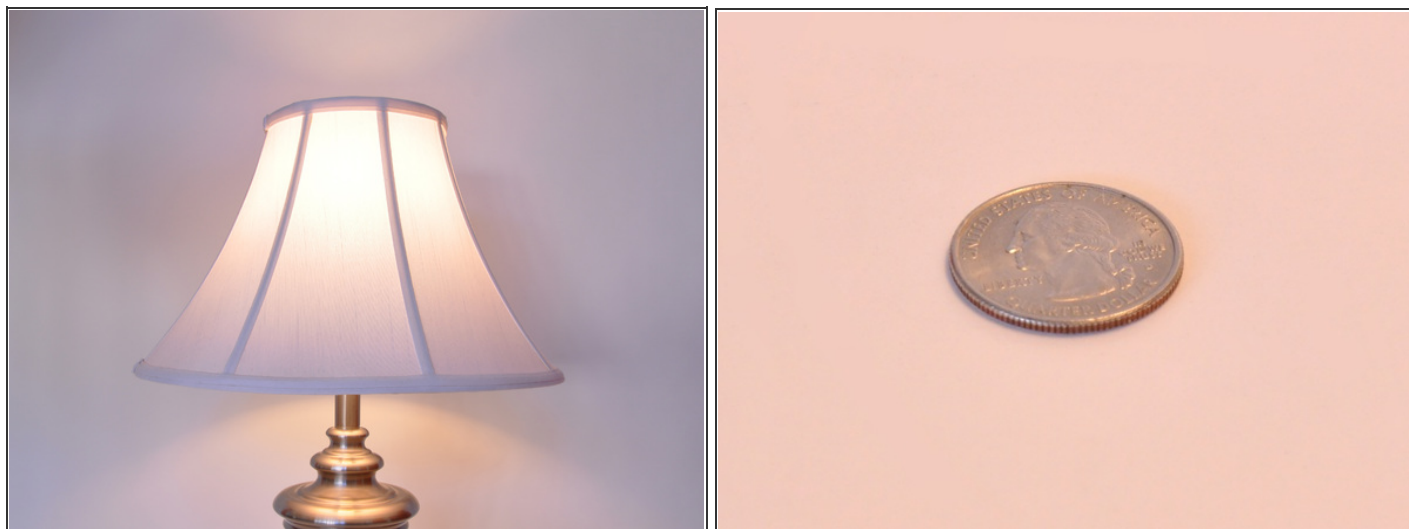
- A proper photographic light fixture should house three or four individual light bulbs. To cut down on harsh glare, each fixture should have a diffuser that slips on over the front of it. The fixture should be adjustable, both in terms of height and light angle.
- To achieve proper lighting, you need to be sure that both your subject and your background are sufficiently lit. By using four light fixtures, you can place two on either side of the camera and two more along the sides of the table towards the back.

Step 3 — Selecting Light Bulbs



- Selecting the proper light bulbs is just as important as selecting the correct light fixtures.
- Aside from the correct output rating, the most important aspect of your light bulbs to consider is the light temperature, usually stated in thousands of Kelvin (K).
- For guide photos you should use 5000K or 5500K "daylight" bulbs for a bright white light.

Step 4



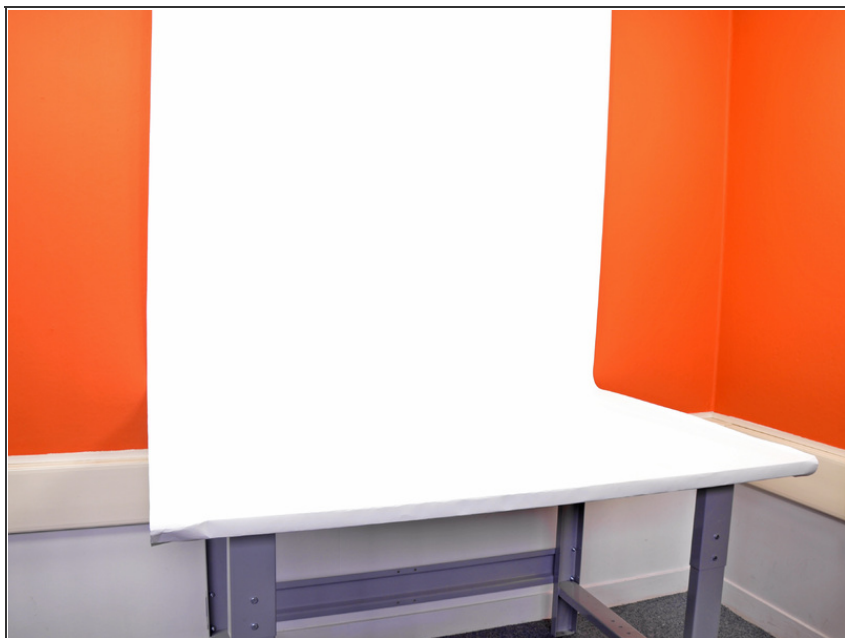
- Before we take a look at what good light is, let's take a gander at some not-so-good light.
- This household lamp has a 2700K "soft white" compact fluorescent (CFL) bulb in it, just like you would use in your home.
- Though these bulbs create a comfortable atmosphere for watching television or reading a magazine, but they create an orange hue. This will require added work in the post-processing of photos.


Step 5



- Replacing the weak CFL with a 5000k bulb produces a much brighter and white, light.
- This light results in a much nicer stock photo and will reduce the amount of work required in the post-processing of photos.

Step 6



- You don't have to be picky about what kind of table you use, but you should be mindful of what you place on top of the table to use as a backdrop.
- A clean white working surface is ideal for taking photos, as colored backgrounds can be distracting. Also be aware that any colored surfaces around your photo studio can reflect their colors onto your subject.
- The table shown here has a large roll of white construction paper laid on top of it and taped in place. It doesn't have to be fancy; it just has to work! 
- Be sure to cover the surface behind the table, in addition to the table itself, since you likely won't be taking every single shot with the camera pointed straight at the table.

Step 7



- And there you have it! You've got a professional quality lighting setup and are ready to start taking great guide photos.

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